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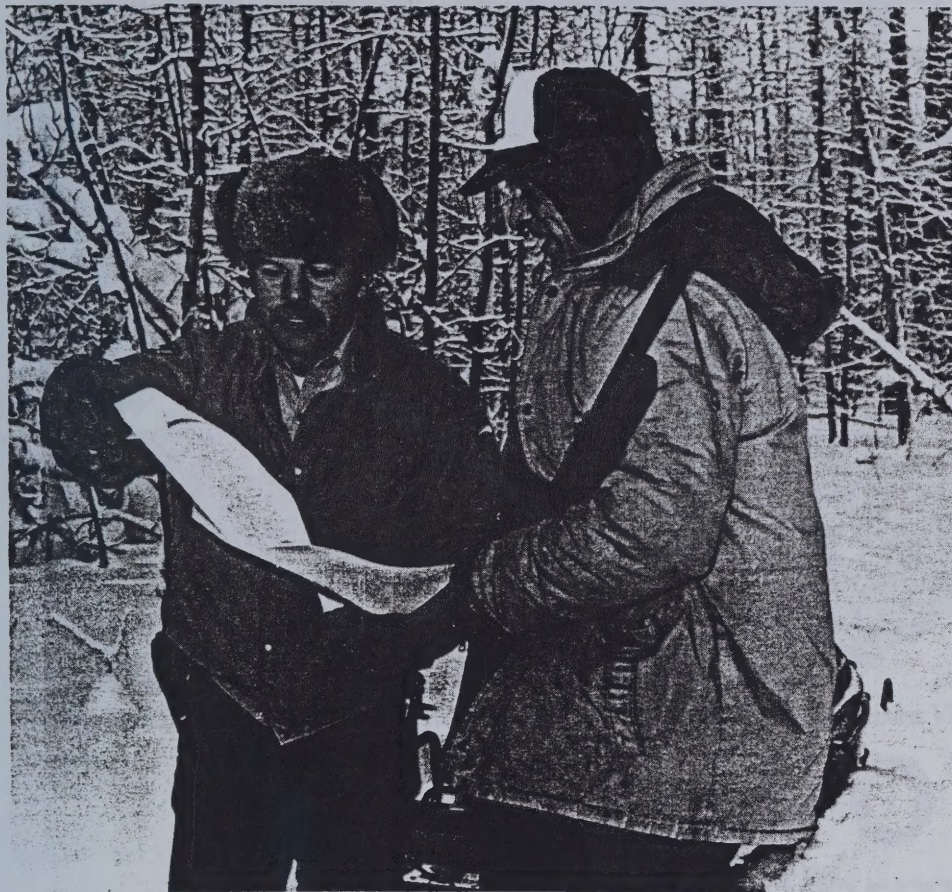
managing public lands for multiple use

Issue 22 March 1990



Lightning
watch on
Mt. Redoubt

New ranger tackles tundra



Ranger Stevens (left) gives trail information to Fairbanks hunter Don Duranceau.

BLM's Arctic District now has a ranger. The third ranger BLM has hired for Alaska, Wayne Stevens will be responsible for natural resource protection and public contact for a district that covers more than 34 million acres of land!

His beat includes the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and the Utility Corridor (through which the Trans-Alaska Pipeline carries the oil from Prudhoe Bay). Stevens faces interesting prospects in those remote lands. The Dalton Highway, which bisects northern Alaska from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay, is the only developed road in the whole district. Therefore, most travel is by air. He's looking forward to that, and says, "I want to finish out

flying lessons I started in Nevada. I hope to get a lot of air time."

After moving from the Barstow Resource Area in California, Stevens says, "I wanted to move north. I prefer four seasons and snow."

Stevens, who spent almost eight years in Ely, Nevada, as a range conservationist, comments, "My resource background helps me as a ranger, because I understand management. I see a bigger picture than people would expect." He was also a reserve deputy sheriff in Nevada for three years before he decided to combine his resource background with law enforcement for BLM. "It's fun—gets me out from behind a desk," Stevens says.

—SDW/JM

BLM sponsors archaeology conference

BLM-Alaska is sponsoring a meeting in March at which 200 to 300 anthropologists will discuss historical archaeology in Alaska. The 17th annual meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association will be held March 9-10 at the Westmark Hotel in Fairbanks, and is open to the public.

BLM anthropologist Bob King will present a paper on the history of "tin cans" in Alaska, from pre-gold rush times through today. King says, "Spam cans with keys are going out..."

BLM anthropologist John Cook will give a poster presentation on Obsidian Characterization and Distribution. BLM archaeologist Julie Steele will present a paper, "The Upper Chilkat Valley: Archaeological Investigations at Three Rockshelters." (See *Frontiers* Issue 19 for cave article.)

The general symposium topics include "The Sounds of Silence: Social Science Research and the Exxon Valdez oil Spill Disaster," "Culture Contact and Change in Arctic and Subarctic Areas," "Life Histories," and "Tribes in Alaska: Anthropological, Legal and Tribal Perspectives."

Guest luncheon speakers will be Dr. Annette McFayden Clark, of the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa, Ontario; and Dr. James Deetz of the University of California-Berkeley.

For more details, contact John Cook at 474-2311 or Howard Smith at 474-2342.

—EB

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Mt. Redoubt emits a cloud of steam in this recent photo by the Alaska Volcano Observatory.

BLOWOUT

or false alarm?

When volcano watchers need to distinguish between ash and steam, BLM lightning detectors may do the job

What do wildfires and volcanic eruptions have in common? Lightning. In an attempt to detect lightning associated with ash-producing eruptions of Mount Redoubt, the Alaska Volcano Observatory has asked for help from the Bureau of Land Management.

Lightning is associated with eruptions that cause ash plumes, but not those that produce only steam. Geologist Betsy Yount of the Alaska Volcano Observatory explained, "Explosive eruptions are the ones that form ash clouds. When a cloud of ash is formed, it is charged with electricity and sets off lightning."

The Alaska Volcano Observatory's instruments can indicate eruptions, but don't always distinguish between an ash plume and a vigorous steam plume. The difference is vital to airlines and air travelers, because flying through a cloud of ash can ruin a plane's engines.

The BLM's Alaska Fire Service has used lightning detectors for several years to predict where wildfires are likely to start. The detectors are removed

for maintenance in the winter.

Now, in response to the request from the volcano observatory, the fire service will re-activate detectors in Aniak, McGrath and Anchorage. These will be linked to a BLM computer in Fairbanks which will determine the exact location and time of the lightning and send the information to the Alaska Volcano Observatory in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Scientists hope the BLM's lightning-detecting equipment will signal the formation of ash during any future eruptions of Mount Redoubt, allowing for warning aircraft. They expect this information to be especially useful in overcast weather when ground observations of the volcano are impossible.

Because the lightning ceases as an ash cloud cools and diffuses, it probably won't be possible to track the movement of an ash cloud, Yount says, but the new equipment may help scientists study the way the lightning behaves.

Mount Redoubt first erupted on December 14, and has been disrupting air traffic intermittently ever since.

SM/JM

BLM sells community lots to Wiseman residents

Bush dwellers
allowed to buy land
under cabins
they restored

Some 270 miles north of Fairbanks on the banks of the Middle Fork Koyukuk River, hidden from passing travelers on the Dalton Highway, is a tiny cluster of old miners' cabins that forms the community of Wiseman, Alaska. The Bureau of Land Management has almost completed the sale of 23 sites in this historic community in an effort to put residentially occupied public lands into private hands. The sales should successfully resolve long-standing land disputes in the area.

Wiseman was settled by early-day gold prospectors around 1900, and started to grow in 1907 as claims were developed in the vicinity. The population peaked at 71 permanent residents in 1931. Later, mining cabins were abandoned and began to deteriorate. People who moved into the cabins in the 1950s repaired and maintained the historic structures.

The community of Wiseman occupies public land managed by

the BLM's Arctic District. Occupancy without legal title is not allowed on public lands. Community residents made several attempts to resolve the problem in the 1970s. In 1982, the BLM decided to sell the land to the occupants. After seven years of research and boundary negotiations, BLM is now selling individual parcels of land to those who applied for title in the early 1970s.

More than half of the parcels, which average an acre in size, have now been sold. Purchase prices ranging from \$450 to \$7,000 are based on the fair market value of the land as determined by the BLM chief state appraiser, and include BLM's cost of survey.

"The government appreciates the fact that these people helped preserve a part of this country's early mining history," said Tom Dean, manager of the Arctic District. "Now the residents can take pride in owning an important bit of American heritage."

—SDW



Airplanes were a boon to the roadless settlement of Wiseman in the 1930s.



Residents of the Upper Koyukuk, around 1930. From left, Billie Burke, Ase Wilcox, Jesse Allen, Martin Slisco, Smith Wannamaker, Carl Frank, George Huey, Pete Davey, Jack Hood, and Earl Workman (a visitor). Photo was taken by Robert Marshall for his book, Arctic Village. Many of the old cabins were built by these "veterans of the north," as Marshall called them.



As gold mining developed in the Koyukuk Mining District, cabins were built on the bank of the Middle Fork Koyukuk River.

History haunts the Iditarod Trail



Historic photo shows Old Woman mountain and original cabin at the site.

Natives say that a ghost inhabits Old Woman Mountain. Now a historic site on a leg of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, Old Woman Mountain is a place full of legend and history.

Those who travel the trail invariably notice the mountain, a 1,400-foot peak that is a prominent geographic landmark in the tundra grasslands of this area. The summit has always been used by hunters as a game lookout, and at its base hunters and trappers often make

camp.

The mountain and later a cabin supposedly got their name after an "old woman" was killed there by an avalanche. According to Native legend the aged apparition does her haunting at midnight, and is said to take the form of animals.

Management of the 2,000-mile Iditarod National Historic Trail and its connecting trails, is divided among many federal, state and private land owners. But BLM has been designated by Congress to

coordinate all planning efforts for management of the trail. BLM manages several segments of the trail between Rainy Pass and Nome. However, the single largest concentration of trail managed by the BLM lies between Kaltag and Unalakleet.

Before the white man came to the lowlands of the Unalakleet valley, the Indians of the subarctic boreal forest and the Eskimos of the coast and around the Unalakleet River were trading goods with each other. They traveled the Kaltag Portage so the Indians could swap furs, wood products and foods like salmon, bear, beaver and muskrat for the Eskimos' beluga whale, seal oil and reindeer skins.

Later, during the 1830s, Russian fur traders became aware of the Kaltag trail and were able to expand their trade. They effectively eliminated the Natives' monopoly of the fur trade by using this quick route to the Middle Yukon River.

In the late 1800s dog mushing mail carriers passed through the area on a regular basis, taking letters to mail-hungry miners. In the early 1900s a man named Samuelson built a shelter cabin for mail carriers at the Old Woman site. At that same time the U.S. Signal Corps was laying telegraph line for the Wash-



Early-day miners pan and dig for gold.

ington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System between Unalakleet and Old Woman Mountain. The telegraph station atop the mountain peak provided Unalakleet with communication with the rest of Alaska.

Until the 1930s, mail was carried over the Kaltag trail weekly by dog sled. Then the arrival of air travel in Alaska began the decline of dogmushing. The remains of the cabin were claimed by a slough of the Old Woman River in the late 1970s.

However, a 12-by-16-foot plywood emergency shelter cabin built in 1983 near the Old Woman Cabin site does provide shelter for those traveling the trail nowadays.

Since the Iditarod Trail was designated a national historic trail in 1978, BLM, the state, U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the cities of Nome and Seward, the Iditarod Trail Blazers (ITB), and the Kenai Borough have all officially signed on as Iditarod Trail management partners. BLM is still involved in legal reservation of the trail on conveyances to Native corporations and individual Native allotments.

Last summer the BLM Anchorage district office built the Tripod Flats shelter cabin near Kaltag. BLM, with volunteer help from the Iditarod



Dave Kelley and Julie Steele beside a piece of the 1902 telegraph cable. Kelley displays a flattened, rusted old Prince Albert tobacco tin.

Trail Committee, marked the trail through the Farewell Burn in 1987, eliminating a hazard on the Iditarod race route.

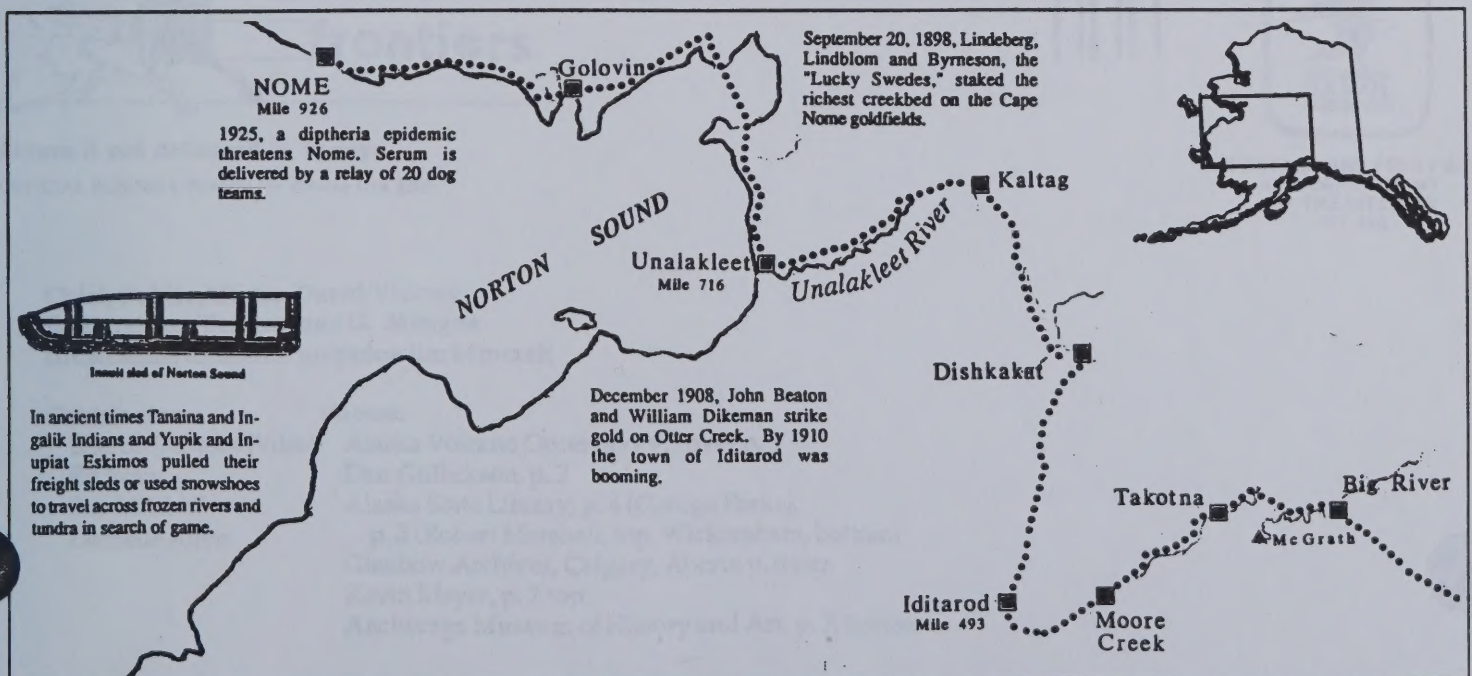
In the Seward area on land managed by the Forest Service, the trail was reconstructed by the Forest Service and the Iditarod Trail Blazers.

Julie Steele, Anchorage District archaeologist says, "The Iditarod Trail ties together so many of the threads of Alaska's past—prehistoric trade, the Russian era, mining, early

federal communications and trail-building efforts—that it really merits everything we can do to preserve and protect it for the future."

Anchorage District Manager Dick Vernimen says, "Marking the 90 miles of trail between Kaltag and Unalakleet is a high priority for us." Like other land owners and managers who oversee portions of the trail, BLM is bound by the comprehensive management plan.

—DA



Anchorage consulting geologist and contractor **Charles C. (Chuck) Hawley** has been appointed by Secretary of the Interior **Manuel Lujan** to the **National Public Lands Advisory Council**. This 21-member panel of citizens advises the Secretary and the Director of the BLM on national policies and programs for the more than 270 million acres of public lands and natural resources under BLM jurisdiction.

Gene Schloemer, 57, has been named **new manager of the BLM Alaska Fire Service**, filling the vacancy left by the retirement of **Tom Owen**. Schloemer will be responsible for the Interior Department's fire control efforts in Alaska. He comes to Alaska from **Boise, Idaho**, where he was chief of the BLM resources division.

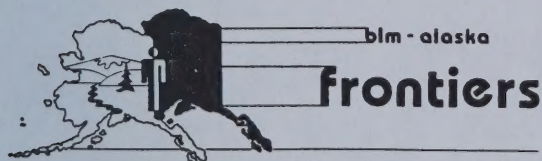
In January **Dave Liebersbach**, zone fire management officer with BLM's Alaska Fire Service, received a **Special Achievement Award** from the regional director of the **National Park Service**. Liebersbach was incident commander of an incident management team that worked in the **Kenai Fjords National Park** on the **Exxon Valdez** oil spill. The Park Service commended Liebersbach for organizing and managing response operations in **Seward** during the early days of the spill and for his efforts in helping to establish a multi-agency coordination group in **Seward**.

Secretary of the Interior **Manuel Lujan, Jr.**, announced in December an agreement to exchange lands and property in **Bethel** to ensure continuing hospital services to **Alaska Natives**. The agreement between **Bethel Native Corporation** and the Departments of the Interior and Health and Human Services resolves long-standing questions about the ownership of the **Bethel Native Hospital** and provides the Native corporation with land in downtown **Bethel** selected under the **Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act**.

Governor Steve Cowper honored **BLM-Alaska** with the 1989 award from the **Alaska Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities**. The award, presented by **Frances Smith**, Anchorage manager of the **U.S. Office of Personnel Management**, recognized BLM for hiring 25 people with disabilities, eight of whom had severe disabilities.

"BLM has been one of the leaders in hiring the handicapped over the years in Alaska," said **Smith**.

Info-Tech Development, Inc., has begun work under a three-year contract to collect data for BLM's geographic coordinate data base. The firm will collect data on more than 3,000 townships.



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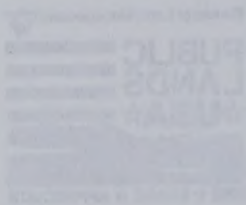
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Danielle Allen	p. 5 (Robert Marshall, top, Wickersham, bottom)
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Government 2000 Computer Award
BLM Alaska with the 1997 award
from the Alaska Governor's Council
on Employment of People
with Disabilities. The award
presented by Governor Scott, Alaska
Governor, was in the U.S. Office
of Personnel Management, present
at the BLM Alaska office with
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BLM's Alaska Fire Service, received
a Special Achievement Award from
the regional director of the National
Fire Service. Laborsbach was
recipient of an award of an incident
management team that worked in
the Klamath River National Park on
the Klamath Valley in April. The Park
Service announced Laborsbach for
outstanding and managing response
operation in 1997 and the 1998
early days of the year and the 1999
effort in helping to establish a
multi-agency coordination group in
response.

Secretary of the Interior, Richard
Lujan, announced in December
an agreement to exchange land and
property in Alaska to manage
existing federal lands in Alaska
Native. The agreement between
Federal Indian Corporation and the
Department of the Interior and
Indian and Alaska Native
long-standing questions about the
ownership of the Federal Indian
Hospital and provides the Indian
corporation with land in the western
Alaska located under the Alaska
Native Claims Settlement Act.

Archaeologist and geologist
and consultant Charles C. (Chuck)
Hewley has been appointed by
Secretary of the Interior, Richard
Lujan to the National Wildlife Lands
Advisory Council. The 21-member
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Glenn Schumann, 72, has been
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Alaska Fire Service, filling the
vacancy left by the retirement of
Tom Owen. Schumann will be
responsible for the Interior
Department's fire control efforts in
Alaska. He comes to Alaska from
Idaho where he was chief of
the fire program division.



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Frontier is published 10 times
a year by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior.

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